



PROJEKT GRAĐANSKIH PRAVA Civil Rights Project

Activity Report – December 2010

Office activities

In the reporting period, CRP Sisak received **217** clients, out of which there were **44** new clients, both in the CRP Sisak office and the Civil Centre Hrvatska Kostajnica.

Target groups:

NEW clients by status:

<i>Status</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Domicile	31
Returnee	3
Settlers	1
Refugee	5
Not defined	4
<u>Total</u>	44

NEW clients by reception mode:

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Office	40
Field	3
Phone	1
<u>Total</u>	44

TYPE OF CASE	NUMBER OF EVENTS
Citizenship	10
Documents and status	20
Ownership	36
Pension and health and social security	46
Housing care/tenancy rights	36

Labour	8
Family violence	5
Free legal aid	1
Crime cases/misdemeanour	11
Other: other legal issues, information, courses, etc.	86
TOTAL	259

During the reporting period, there were **119** successfully solved requests. They mainly relate to documents, establishment of ownership and other cases.

ASSISTANCE

Appeals/complaints	16
Lawsuits	1
Constitutional complaint	2
Letters	71
Requests	12
Submissions	25
Legal and psychosocial and other types of counseling	120
Quick advises	30
TOTAL	277

Legal issues

The legal issues that CRP has been dealing with remain the same, as it can be seen in the table above (type of case.) Also, despite of some changes in proceedings, the problems related to cases remain generally the same: lengthy proceedings, postponing of court hearings, not encouraging the return of refugees, etc. The courts and administration do not act impartially when the State is involved in the case, but exactly the opposite, being completely on the side of the State. The laws, even when they are good, are not being applied well, etc.

CRP was reporting on the problem of **health insurance of foreigners in Croatia** in March 2010. It has been said that there is discrepancy between the Law on health insurance of foreigners in the Republic of Croatia and the Law on obligatory health insurance, which prevents temporary residing foreigners from having insurance on any other basis, except for paying for it.

It is a huge problem for returnees to Croatia, who lost their permanent residence (and citizenship) in 1991 when they fled Croatia.

However, during 2010, CRP Sisak was writing **requests for writing off the debts** for health insurance, as the clients do not get monthly payment slips, so they get periodically big payment slips amounting to several thousands of HRK, which they cannot pay. Therefore, CRP was, on behalf of clients, sending writing off requests to the Tax office, explaining difficult situation of clients.

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Until October 2010, the CRP clients were receiving positive answers to the writing off requests.

However, in October 2010, the clients started receiving letters from the Tax office asking them to submit the request in the Tax office form and to attach the following documents: on the income for the last three months, on the property, on real estates, on vehicles, including boats, on employment, on social welfare status, as well as any other relevant documents. All the documents must be provided for the client and the family members. For some of the documents, the administrative fee must be paid.

CRP assisted clients to collect all the above mentioned documents and send the requests.

However, the clients started receiving negative decisions. E.g. the client **S.D.** was in September 2010 rejected with her request for writing off, though in January 2010 her first request was approved. The explanation for rejection was only one sentence saying that the client's existence would not be threatened by paying of the debt. (The client's family only income is the husband's pension in the amount of 1.000,00 HRK)

The other client **D.N.** was rejected in December, with an explanation that the husband was owner of few cars. However, the client is of the Roma ethnicity and the husband has few cars registered in his name, but he does not possess them, which in fact makes the problem why he cannot cancel the registration of cars. However, they are poor and cannot pay the debt.

Therefore, the procedure for writing off the debts became more complex and expensive, and decisions of the Tax office became more negative.

Other activities

On 1 December, CRP, together with Paal Nesse of the Norwegian Refugee Council from Oslo, visited the EU Delegation and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Zagreb. The situation with human rights in Croatia, as well as the CRP activities, with accent on the free legal aid, were discussed. UNHCR was also met in order to discuss the joint 2011 activities.

On 2 December, CRP visited the village of Klinac, near Petrinja, to see the beneficiaries that were connected to the water supply system, which was repaired by the donation of the Norwegian embassy in Zagreb. All the households are connected to the water supply system and the people are very happy to have water in houses.

On 2 December, CRP and Paal Nesse met with the Mayor of Hrvatska Kostajnica in order to discuss the cooperation. It was once again confirmed that there was very good cooperation between CRP and the Town and it will continue in 2011.

On 3 December, CRP and Paal Nesse met with the Norwegian embassy. The embassy was informed on the water supply system project, as well as of the CRP's project in 2011.

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On 15 December, CRP was present at the ceremony of donation the Croatian Post, which donated 600 “free” letters to CRP for 2011.

On 21 December, CRP visited Dvor and Hrvatska Kostajnica in order to inform authorities there of the 2011 project that would be implemented in Banija and Kordun. The main activity of the project is providing of free legal aid and the project is financed by UNHCR. CRP agreed with the authorities that the office premises would be provided by them.

On 22 December, CRP was present at the regular meetings between the City of Sisak and NGOs. The City informed NGOs of the financial crisis and reduced financial sources for NGOs.

On 23 December, CRP met with the Mayor and his deputy in Gvozd regarding the 2011 free legal aid project. CRP asked for the office premises.